

See Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training class 05-06, page 6

Border Eagle

Vol. 53, No. 10

Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas

March 11, 2005

Commercial passenger flights come to Del Rio

By Kathy White
Public Affairs

As the sun rose over Del Rio March 3, a small passenger airplane rose with it from Del Rio International Airport. Continental Express flight number 9851 was the first commercial airline flight out of Del Rio in years.

Twice daily flights go between Del Rio and Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport. From Houston, passengers can connect to destinations worldwide.

While many at Laughlin will see this as a way to vacation or visit distant relatives, there's a mission impact, too. Some TDY travel probably will be booked from Del Rio rather than San Antonio.

Unit commanders will decide whether TDY travel originating at Del Rio International Airport is more practical than flying from San Antonio

See 'Flights,' page 4



Photos by Airman 1st Class Olufemi Owolabi

Still in progress...

(Center left) Second Lieutenant Nathan Olsen and Airman 1st Class Darious Jones, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron, check the progress of the outside runway construction here Wednesday as contractors lay asphalt on the runway. The approximately 9,000 foot runway construction started in December and is scheduled to be completed in April. Lieutenant Olsen is the project manager for the \$11.1 million runway construction project.

Former XLer selected for promotion to E-8

Compiled from staffs reports

Air Force officials selected 1,535 master sergeants for promotion to senior master sergeant.

During this selection, one former Laughlin member, Master Sgt. Gail Henderson, base training manager, was selected for promotion.

Sergeant Henderson is now assigned to U.S. Air Force Academy, Colo. as an academy military trainer.

The promotion list was publicly

released Wednesday at 9 a.m. CST, and the complete list is available on the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/eprom.

The board, which convened Jan. 31 to Feb. 18, considered 16,708 master sergeants for a 9.19 percent selection rate.

The average score for those selected was 663.46 with an average time in grade and time in service of 4.54 and 20.16 years respectively. The average score was based on the following point averages:

- 134.98 for performance reports.
- 33.48 for time in grade.
- 21.24 for time in service.
- 20.43 for decorations.
- 66.32 for Air Force supervisory examination.
- 387.01 for board score.

Score notices will be available on the virtual military personnel flight March 11.

Those selected Air Force wide will be promoted beginning in April.

(Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

Newslines

Air Show volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed from April 15 to 17 for the Air Show. Interested members may call 298-4030 or submit name, rank (if applicable), unit, date available, email and phone number to Capt. Jason Wetherell at jason.wetherell@laughlin.af.mil by April 13.

Townhall meeting set

The 47th Medical Group commander, Col. Laura Torres-Reyes, will host a town hall meeting March 29 at 5 p.m. in the base theater. All Tricare beneficiaries are invited. For more information on the meeting, call 1st Lt. Lauren Chavez at 298-6312.

HCAC meeting scheduled

A Health Consumer's Advisory Council forum is scheduled at 1 p.m. April 1 in the Health and Wellness Center conference room. The forum is an exchange of information between Laughlin health care providers and consumers.

For more information, call Stephanie McKinney at 298-6311.

Special duty briefing set

A special duty assignment team will brief Laughlin members on becoming military training instructors (MTI), recruiters and other special duties available in Anderson Hall April 6 from 10 a.m. to noon.

To obtain an application, call Master Sgt. Jeffrey Cunningham at 298-5456.

Deployment stats

Deployed:	29
Returning in 30 days:	2
Deploying in 30 days:	1

Mission status

Mission capable rate
(As of Tuesday)

T-1, 91.7%	T-38A, 73.6%
T-6, 91.2%	T-38C, 72.0%

American experience: promise of the future



Commander's Corner

By Lt. Col. Joseph Lim
47th Flying Training Wing
Chaplain

The past two decades have been unforgettable years for America and the world. Burned deep in my memory are some galvanizing images of events that happened which changed the face of the world and promised hope for the future.

Let me share with you some of these images.

On Nov. 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall for all intents and purposes came tumbling down.

I was in Suwon, Korea then and I can remember—we watched on television, dumbfounded, as thousands of people in Berlin from both sides of that divided city danced on the Wall together—the Wall that had separated them since 1961.

A few weeks earlier if they had tried that, they would have been shot to death. We watched; we saw it as they streamed back and forth through the jagged holes that they had literally torn with their bare hands.

And then someone started singing, and soon they were all singing. But they weren't singing in German. They were singing in English: "We shall overcome... deep in my heart... I do believe... we shall overcome someday..."

That bedrock value of the American experience — the promise of freedom — was being sung by Berliners standing arm in arm, East and West, on that wretched wall.

On Nov. 28, of that same year, one of the most historic events of history took place. Mikhail Gorbachev, the czar of world atheism, and Pope John

Paul II, the leader of the largest body of Christendom, met. This meeting showed the world that though someone can try to subvert the faith of a nation, and thwart and stifle the faith of a people, faith is a flame that simply cannot be extinguished.

World headlines read, "Communism Crumbles, Faith Triumphs." And we stood in unbelieving awe as the promise of faith was recognized and admitted by none other than the leader of institutionalized, militant atheism.

On Sept. 27, 1990, during a general strike in the mining industry in Bucharest, a man in grimy overalls climbed up onto a platform to talk to his fellow workers, and this is what he said to them, and the whole world was eavesdropping: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The American experience — the promise of the future articulated by a Romanian miner.

On Jan. 30, of this year, the Iraqis saw the dawning of democracy as millions lined the streets to exercise their basic right to vote.

Their commitment to freedom took them through the most perilous corners of their war-torn land, to find the nearest voting booth, trying to elude the dastardly destruction of the enemies of freedom.

The Iraqis were committed to freedom even it meant their impending death.

Whenever I think of commitment, I think of the signers of our Declaration of Independence, who by placing their signatures on that document, were marked for the scaffold.

John Hancock said, "I'll write

'You and I who are in the profession of arms are committed to defend the cause of freedom and peace in our world. We must be combat ready at all times. We must train and prepare combat-ready warriors. '

my name so large that King George will have no difficulty recognizing it."

Did they pay the price of commitment? You bet they did! Five were captured and tortured before they died. Nine died in the Revolutionary War itself. Twelve had their homes sacked, looted, burned or occupied by the enemy.

You and I who are in the profession of arms are committed to defend the cause of freedom and peace in our world. We must be combat ready at all times. We must train and prepare combat-ready warriors.

Our mission — (Through trust and teamwork, train expeditionary airpower experts to fight and win America's wars) is a sacred trust that must be kept aflame each day.

We owe our troops the best training — physical, mental, and spiritual. Our vow is to carry on that noble task of defending the principles of liberty and democracy, wherever they are being violated or attacked, whatever it takes.

Let us keep our commitments, our promises to the end. I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. And that's enough.

To all of you who made promises and intend to keep them, some thought-provoking words from the poet Robert Frost: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep."

Border Eagle

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Deadlines

News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262.

Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: olufemi.owolabi@laughlin.af.mil or sheila.johnston@laughlin.af.mil.

Advertising

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Actionline

Col. Tod Wolters
47th Flying Training
Wing commander



Call 298-5351 or email
actionline@laughlin.af.mil

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By including your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also useful if more information is needed to pursue your inquiry. We will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

Before you call in or e-mail an Actionline, please try to work out the problem through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved. Please keep e-mails brief.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions. Below are telephone numbers that may be helpful when working your issue with a base agency.

AAFES	298-3176
Chapel	298-5111
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299
Clinic	298-6311
Commissary	298-5815
Contracting	298-5439
Dormitory manager	298-5213
EEO	298-5879
Finance	298-5204
FWA hotline	298-4170
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Inspector General	298-5638
Legal	298-5172
MEO	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

“Through trust and teamwork, train expeditionary airpower experts to fight and win America’s wars.”

– 47th Flying
Training Wing
mission statement

AETC command chief retires, talks on career

By Chief Master Sgt. Karl Meyers
Command Chief Master Sergeant
Air Education and Training
Command

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE — The first time I raised my right hand and took an oath to protect this country is a day forever ingrained in my memory. I can still feel the rush of pride coupled with the anticipation of the unknown as I repeated those words. Now here I am, 27 years later, and I'm experiencing those same feelings all over again. Only this time the pride comes from opportunities and experiences I've had in my Air Force career that have made my oath more than just words.

I've tried to use this time before I say my official good-byes to reflect on the paths I have chosen and the impressions I have left behind.

During my Air Force career I've been happy to make a difference where I could. I am proud to have served in

the Air Force. Those of us in the First Command have what we believe is the Air Force's most important mission; training America's sons and daughters. The people in Air Education and Training Command have the unique opportunity to shape our Airmen from day one, and I feel privileged to end my career where so many new ones begin.

Since 1947, we have been molding and shaping our Air Force to be the best it can be. AETC is continuously changing the way we train troops for deployments with recent initiatives such as the Expeditionary Combat Airman, Battlefield Airman Concept and Battlefield Combat Convoy Course. These initiatives, along with continued improvement to basic training's Warrior Week, are better preparing our Airmen for challenges they may face across the globe.

With a force of highly professional, educated and extremely motivated Airmen, there are no boundaries to what

we are capable of tomorrow.

As I enter the final days of my career I'd like to leave the men and women of AETC with some thoughts. I challenge you to do your best each and every day.

The Air Force is full of opportunities — step up to these challenges and volunteer for leadership positions. Most importantly, take care of the people, and they will take care of you and the mission. Always remember, your role — providing freedom for more than 300 million Americans— is not something anyone should take lightly.

Thank you for serving your country and ensuring the oath we all take is more than just words.

Editor's note:

Chief Meyers is retiring today and Chief Master Sgt. Rodney E. Ellison, Air Combat Command command chief master sergeant, will succeed him.

Honor retreat from both sides of the street

By Staff Sgt. Stephani Bair
Airman Leadership School
instructor

FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. — One cold and rainy day I stood in the parking lot across the street from the wing headquarters building with two of my troops to participate in retreat.

While we stood firmly at parade rest, waiting for the flag to lower in honor of our great nation and in memory of the courageous men and women who served before us, we observed the group of noncommissioned officers preparing for the detail. Three of the NCOs stood at the pole and appeared to be greatly enjoying a conversation.

Even though they had taken the halyards into their hands they continued to talk and laugh. Nine other NCOs lined up shoulder to shoulder just off the curb in front of the steps to the wing headquarters building. Some of them stood at parade rest, some at attention, and others hung out casually, hands in pockets, all of them still talking.

What could be more impor-

tant to 12 NCOs than the privilege of lowering our nation's flag in honor of those that have given their all?

I will be the first to admit that our performance at the flag pole is not always flawless. Sometimes students find it impossible to remain steady at parade rest and they shift to wipe the sweat from their brow, or they get distracted by traffic passing by.

Pedestrians, both uniformed and in civilian attire, stroll by without even pausing to acknowledge the music on the loud speaker system.

For many years I found it very difficult to understand how people could show such little regard, or lose their military bearing during such a meaningful ceremony.

We are out of practice.

We are out of practice of performing such a detail; out of practice in giving time to observe such a detail; out of practice in teaching our troops, family and guests what reveille and retreat are all about.

Take a few minutes and talk with your troops, your family and your guests about a truly mean-

ingful way to celebrate the accomplishments of our military members, past and present.

Talk to your troops about how it should be a privilege to stand tall and proudly salute our nation's flag.

Explain to them that when in uniform and the first note of reveille or retreat sounds, they should be at parade rest.

And when "To the Colors" or the National Anthem plays, come to attention and salute smartly. For those in civilian attire, it is as simple as stopping and standing still during reveille or retreat and placing their hand over their heart for the playing of "To the Colors" or the National Anthem.

Think about what it means to be an American, fighting in forces which guard our country and our way of life.

You have pledged your life in the defense of this great nation. Take responsibility for your actions, be proud and teach others the importance of demonstrating the pride and professionalism that make us, not only the world's supreme air power, but the greatest nation on earth.

Tax representatives help members understand laws, exemptions

By Daureen Hickok
47th Flying Training Wing
legal office

Tax season is upon us and Laughlin's tax program is in full swing. This year, the tax center has over 25 volunteer income tax assistance program representatives in the squadrons ready to help. There is plenty of time to give the VITA reps a call to have taxes prepared and E-filed before the April 15 deadline.

To file taxes for a deployed spouse, bring a copy of the orders sending them to a combat zone or a power-of-attorney in order to file jointly.

The 2004 tax season has brought

about changes. One of the changes is the sales tax deduction. The sales tax deduction is for people who itemize instead of taking the standard deduction. In the past, when itemizing, you used to be able to claim any state taxes you paid. Because Texas does not have state tax Texas residents were unable to claim any state tax deduction under the old rules. This year however, residents have a choice to claim state tax paid or sales tax paid.

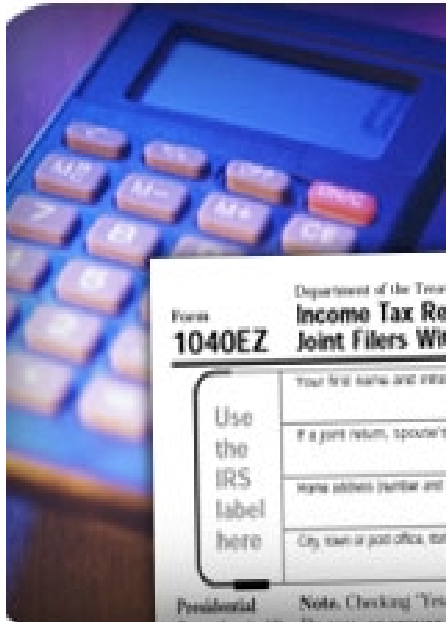
Taking sales tax is an advantage for Texas residents and here is basically how it works.

This year, the IRS has provided a general sales tax table for taxpayers. This table allows resident to take a deduction amount without receipts. In

addition to the amount from the general sales tax table taxpayers can also claim any sales tax paid on leased or purchased items such as an automobile, boat or recreational vehicles.

Another area that many taxpayers can capitalize on is in the child- and dependent-care expenses. When paying a child-care fee taxpayers may be able to receive a tax credit on tax liability. The items needed for a tax appointment is a statement from the child-care provider with address, social security number or identification number, and the total amount paid to them.

Call Laughlin tax center at 298-4858 with questions about taxes or contact unit representatives.



Flights, from page 1

International Airport.

Captain Darrell Burghard, director of the 47th Readiness Division, said unit commanders will determine whether it's better to fly from Del Rio or San Antonio. "Cost will be one factor, but not the only factor. The commander will need to weigh factors like the time difference and the safety factor when determining which departure is best for the unit," he said.

According to Rowland Garza, a marketing director for the city of Del Rio, flying from Del Rio offers many advantages, including free parking. Convenience is a major factor.

"You can fly to almost any city in the continental United States and be there by noon. Because the planes are smaller and there's no crowd, there's no need to be at the airport two hours before the flight to check in," Garza said.

Officials with the Transportation Security Administration, however, do not recommend a last minute dash to the airport.

"Although the airport is small, we are not relaxing security measures. All carry-ons will be x-rayed, just as they are at any airport and checked bags will be searched manually. That takes time," said the TSA's Lynda Johnson. She recommends getting to the airport at least an hour before the flight.

Del Rio International Airport is at the west end of 10th Street in Del Rio, about 15 minutes from base.

Reservations for flights out of Del Rio can be made through most web-based travel sites, through Continental Airline's website or toll-free number or through a travel agent. Because the service is new, use the airport's airline city code, DRT, rather than the name of the town when trying to book a flight.



Courtesy photo

Passengers board a Continental Connection flight from Del Rio International Airport to George Bush International Airport, Houston, March 3. About fifteen people took the trip to Houston.

New plans, programs chief takes post for 47th FTW

Compiled from staff reports

Recently Team XL welcomed a new wing plans and programs chief to the 47th Flying Training Wing.

Lt. Col. James Wingo succeeded Lt. Col. Eddy Stafill Feb. 4.

Colonel Wingo

Hometown: I call Richardson, Texas, my hometown - Dallas area suburb.

Time in service: 17 years

Education: Bachelor's degree in finance from North Texas State University and a Master of Science in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Previous assignments: 13th Air Force, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam; an instructor pilot at Laughlin from 1988 to 1992, Randolph AFB and Barksdale AFB, L.A.



Leadership philosophy: Give the good people around you vision and the right tools - then let them do their jobs.

Personal hero: Are you kidding? My four kids' Mom, no question.

Favorite quote: Why put off until tomorrow what you can do today?

Favorite movie: Star Wars series ranks highly among lots of favorites.

Hobbies: Family is my hobby right now, but I enjoy 'hackin' on computers, reading and politics.

Bad habit: Procrastination, I think... let me get back to you tomorrow.

What or who has inspired you most in life and why?: Ordinary people who make great things happen just by working to be the best at what they do.



Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

COM on guys...

Tech Sgt. Douglas Jefferson sets up a mobile tactical super-high frequency satellite communications terminal during training at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The terminal provides reach-back, long-haul communications from deployed locations to defense information network systems. Sergeant Jefferson is a satellite wideband and telemetry maintenance technician assigned to the 374th Communications Squadron at nearby Camp Zama.

Services searching for teens with their eyes on the sky

By Steve VanWert

Air Force Services Agency Public Affairs

SAN ANTONIO — Teenagers who share a fascination with flight, both airplanes and spacecraft, can apply for the 2005 Teen Aviation Camp and the 2005 Space Camp, but they need to get their application packages in soon, Air Force Services Agency officials said.

Applications for acceptance into the Teen Aviation Camp must be received today, said Services' Bridget Kieschnick.

"There's a little more time to apply for the space camp," said Karen Rudolph, also from Services. "Applications need to be in by April 15 to be considered."

Both camps are well worth the time it takes to apply, officials said.

The Teen Aviation Camp will be held June 4 to 9 at the Air Force Academy. Attendance, for teens from Air Force families, is open to high school students who will complete their freshman or sophomore year in 2005. But applying is only

the start of the competition.

"We ask for verification that (students are) in good standing in their high school," Ms. Kieschnick said. "We look at their role in student leadership. We look at their participation in extracurricular activities and activities outside the school setting, such as youth club, Boys and Girls Club or community service.

We also consider any honors the applicant has received, such as National Honor Society, Congressional Award, Eagle Scout and others."

Last year, 18 girls and 18 boys attended the aviation camp. The group was selected from a pool of 168 applicants.

"The (aviation) camp gives an insight into what life at the Air Force Academy is like," Ms. Kieschnick said.

During the five-day camp, attendees stayed in dormitories and ate in the dining hall. They were on the go from morning to night.

The group participated in mountaineering and orienteering courses, fitness testing and tours of the academy. Aviation-related activities included

lectures on the principles of flight, building gliders, training in flight simulators and orientation flights in academy aero-club planes.

The camp ended with a banquet and graduation ceremony.

Thirty-two young people received scholarships to the 2004 U.S. Space Academy, conducted at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala. They were from Air Force bases worldwide and were selected from 155 applicants.

The 5-day space academy is for youth ages 12-14. Criteria for selection includes a minimum grade point average, extracurricular activities both in and out of school, community service projects and special recognition awards.

Campers go through astronaut training on the multi-axis trainer, ride in the gravity chair, and use a jet backpack simulator.

They also go through all the required training to live aboard a space shuttle, sample space food and learn how to sleep in space.

Applications for both camps are available at the base youth centers.



GRADUATION

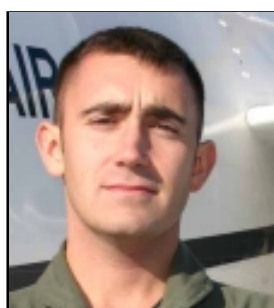
Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 05-06



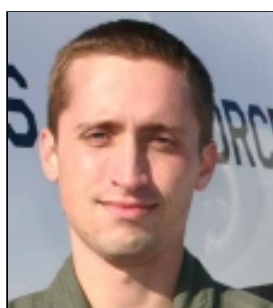
Capt. John Harbour
KC-135
Mildenhall AB, Great Britain



2nd Lt. Alex Adams
T-1A
Laughlin AFB



2nd Lt. Damon Antonetti
C-5 (AFRES)
Dover AFB, Del.



2nd Lt. Robert Browning
C-21
Ramstein AB, Germany



2nd Lt. Bobby Budde III
KC-10
McGuire AFB, N.J.



2nd Lt. David Carn Jr.
KC-135
Grand Forks AFB, N.D.



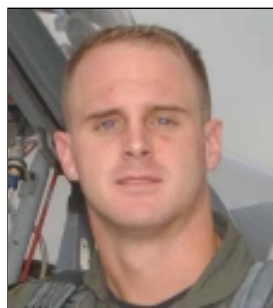
2nd Lt. Michael Chrapkiewicz
C-17 (AFRES)
Charleston AFB, S.C.



2nd Lt. David Cosnek Jr.
KC-135 (ANG)
Pittsburgh ANGB, Penn.



2nd Lt. Jonathan DeArmond
A-10
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.



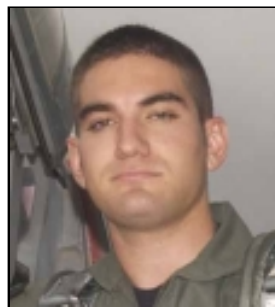
2nd Lt. Michael Elliot
F-16
Luke AFB, Ariz.



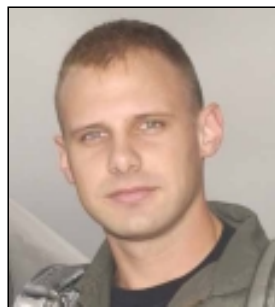
2nd Lt. Matthew Eslow
F-16 (ANG)
Fresno ANGB, Calif.



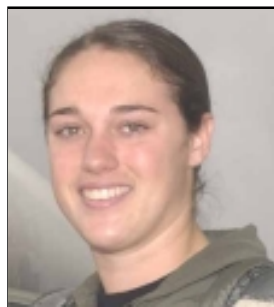
2nd Lt. Scott Frazier
T-6A
Laughlin AFB



2nd Lt. Benjamin Jody
A-10
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.



2nd Lt. Daniel Krowinski
T-6A
Laughlin AFB



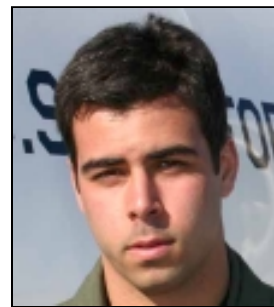
2nd Lt. Tess Labowitch
T-38C
Laughlin AFB



2nd Lt. David Lindholm
C-130
Pope AFB, N.C.



2nd Lt. Allan Maughan
C-21
Yokota AB, Japan



2nd Lt. Jamil Musa
C-17
Charleston AFB, S.C.



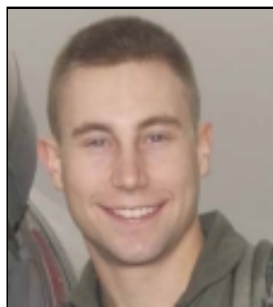
2nd Lt. Ian Ostermiller
C-17
McChord AFB, Wash.



2nd Lt. Matthew Podkowka
C-5 (AFRES)
Westover ARB, Mass.



2nd Lt. Christopher Reid
KC-135
McConnell AFB, Kan.



2nd Lt. Brett Shilling
F-16
Luke AFB, Ariz.



2nd Lt. Jeffrey Sweeney
C-5 (ANG)
Stewart ANGB, N.Y.



2nd Lt. Jay Talbert
F-15C
Tyndall AFB, Fla.

Skeptical blood donor wins new SUV

By Jeanne Grimes
72nd Air Base Wing
public affairs

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla.— Ron Bagby was a hard sell, even as the voice on the phone tried to convince him to come to an Oklahoma City car dealership and pick up the new vehicle he had won.

Mr. Bagby, a mechanic at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center here, laughs about it

now. But he was so skeptical about what he was hearing that he almost did not follow through.

He won a 2005 Saturn Vue in an Oklahoma Blood Institute contest. A long-time blood donor, he regularly gives whole blood and blood products like plasma and platelets and has done so since he was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, with the Army in 1978.

“I wish everyone at Tinker

would give blood to help out our (servicemembers) and our fellow Americans,” he said.

Since coming to work at Tinker in 1999, he has had an arrangement with the institute. They call when they want him to donate, and he obliges. They called in December, asked him to donate and mentioned that they were giving away a car.

When he went to give, a worker there asked if he was “going to sign up for the car?”

Mr. Bagby said.

He said he filled out a card and dropped it into the hopper, putting the matter out of his mind — until recently.

He was watching television at home when the telephone rang. His wife, Deitra, looked at the caller identification, and after not recognizing the name, let the phone ring.

“A few minutes later, my cell phone rang,” Mr. Bagby said. “The caller said, ‘Congratulations on winning a Saturn Vue!’ I said, ‘Yeah.’”

Undaunted, the caller made an educated guess.

“You’ve never won a car before, have you?” the caller asked.

They chatted a few minutes more before Mr. Bagby, still not believing a word he had heard, hung up. He said he told his wife about the conversation and went back to watching television.

The telephone rang again. It was another call about the car.

“He wanted to know what time Monday can I come to pick

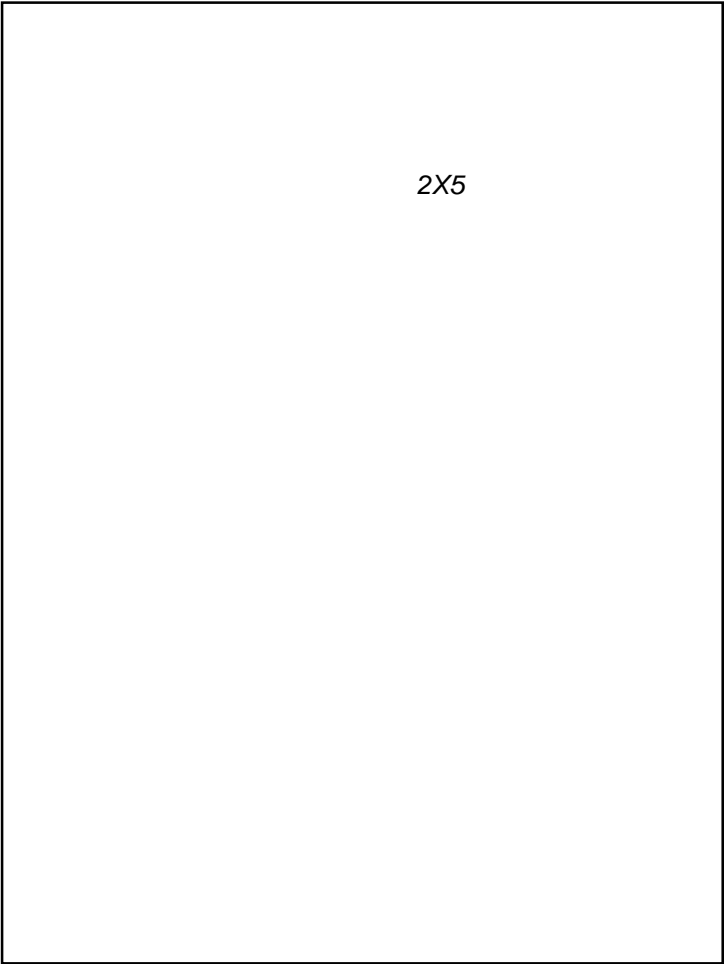
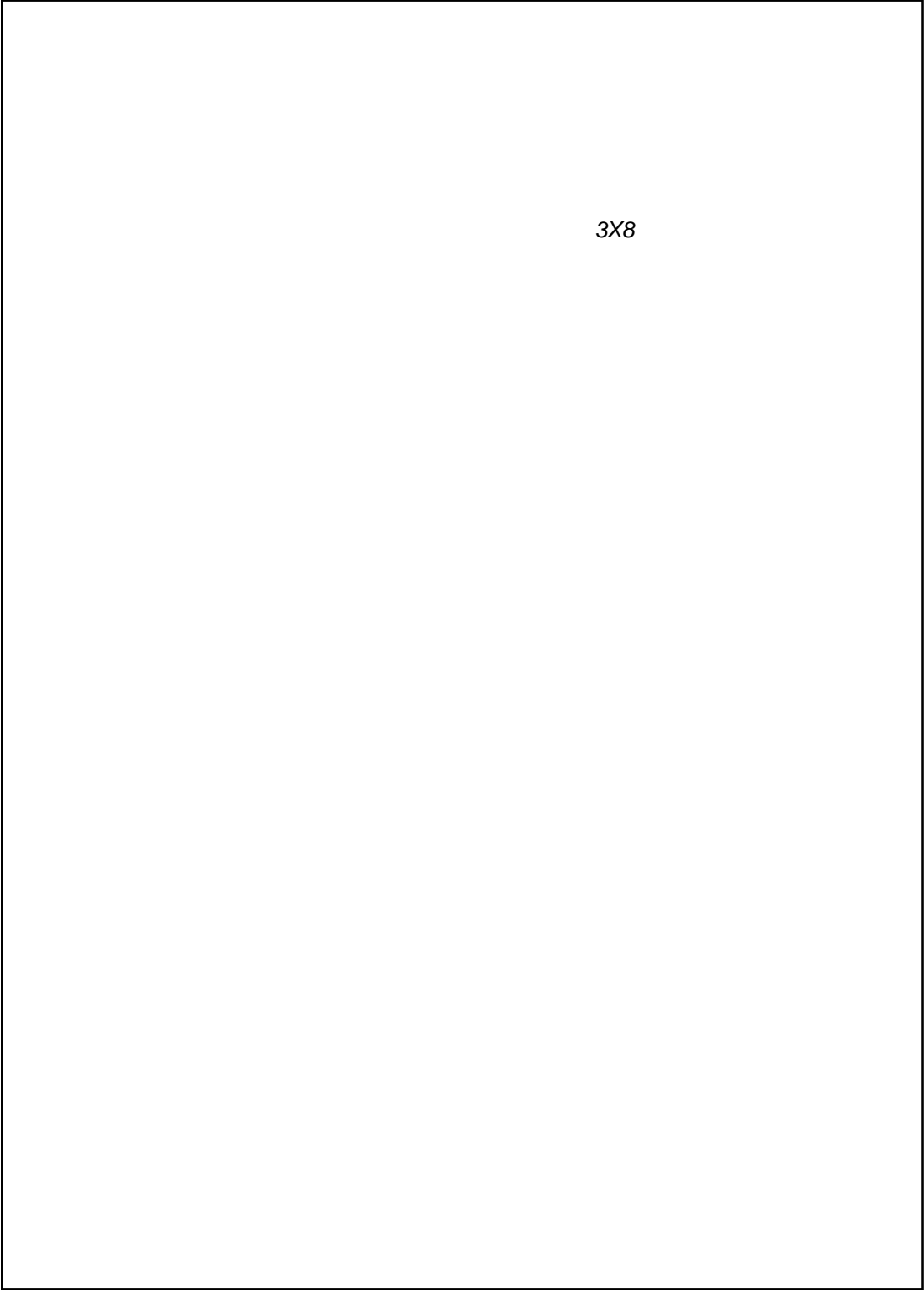
up my Saturn Vue,” Mr. Bagby said. “I thought, ‘I’ll play along with this one,’ so I told him 5 p.m.”

At the appointed hour, the Bagbys went to the dealership. A salesman walked up to them, and Mr. Bagby said he told him, “I’m here to pick up the Saturn,” even though he still did not believe it.

The salesman introduced him to the manager, who pointed out the chili pepper red vehicle, and soon, Mr. Bagby was surrounded by five or six blood institute representatives offering their congratulations.

The only snag has been the Saturn’s 5-speed manual transmission. Mrs. Bagby had never driven a standard. So Mr. Bagby takes her to a large vacant parking lot where she is mastering it. It is not that difficult, Mr. Bagby said. Not like when he learned to drive a standard.

“It’s got a light that comes on and lets you know when to shift,” he said.



4X10

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VA centers offer grief counseling to military families

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

In an unprecedented expansion of its traditional client base, the Department of Veterans Affairs is offering grief counseling to families of servicemembers who die while on active duty.

VA's Office of Readjustment Counseling offers the counseling services at its 206 community-based Vet Centers throughout the United States, including Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Greg Harms, program analyst for the counseling program, said 412 military family members — from spouses to children to siblings, parents and even grandparents — have taken advantage of the program as they struggle to cope with the loss of their 276 servicemembers. Most were killed during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Expanding its services to serve veterans' families represents "quite a leap

and a real innovation" for VA, acknowledged Charles Flora, associate program director. But he calls the offering of bereavement counseling to family members "a natural extension of what we already do for veterans."

Who, Flora asked, is more deserving of VA assistance than families who have sacrificed their husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters or grandchildren in support of their country?

The program also serves families of reservists and National Guardsmen who die while activated for federal duty.

Some families seek the VA's counseling services immediately after learning of their loved ones' loss, while others wait until later, often after an important milestone such as a birthday, holiday or the one-year anniversary of the death has passed, Harms said.

"Everyone grieves differently. It runs the full gamut," he said. "There are no standard operating procedures for grief."

As a result, services offered run the full range, from one- or two-time visits

to weekly sessions, depending on the family member's needs.

Regardless of the level of help needed, the VA service offers all its clients a common variable: a safe, caring environment where a professional bereavement counselor helps them work through the emotional and psychological issues associated with their loss.

"They're looking for support, looking for someone they can talk to who will listen and understand," Harms said. "A lot of what people need," added Flora, "is a place where they can sit down, take a breath and tell their story in a calm place where they can put things into perspective."

While all grief counselors are able to provide that service, the Vet Centers provide something many clients call a big plus: More than half the staff at the Vet Centers are veterans themselves who understand the military lifestyle as well as the tremendous sacrifice the families have made.

Counselors go out of their way to respond to families' needs, often meet-

ing with them the same day they're contacted. They keep clinics open late to accommodate families' schedules and network with other service organizations to reach families in need. And in some cases, they even make home visits for families who might otherwise not be able to tap into their services.

"We've made a science of overcoming every obstacle to care," Flora said.

No medical diagnosis is required to seek help, and services are completely confidential. The only way a counselor can share information on a case is with written permission of the family member. "There's guaranteed clinical confidentiality," Harms said.

Referrals for grief counseling come through military casualty assistance offices, the VA and veterans service organizations. The largest number of referrals comes from TAPS, the nonprofit Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, which offers what Harms calls "incredible peer-to-peer support" but no professional bereavement counseling services.

Senior U.S. officer says 2005 can be a decisive year against extremism

By Gerry Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

This year will likely be a momentous one for U.S. and coalition efforts in confronting extremism in the Middle East region, a senior U.S. officer told the House Armed Services Committee today.

American forces deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq the past few years "have not only been protecting the United States from attack," Army Gen. John P. Abizaid said to committee members, but "has also done much to help the (Middle East) region move forward in the direction of moderation."

Abizaid said he was "optimistic" about the situation across the Middle East, including future developments in Afghanistan and Iraq. As head of U.S. Central Command, he oversees U.S. troop operations

in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I think 2005 can be a decisive year," Abizaid said, in the fight against extremism in the Middle East.

He pointed to recent events in Lebanon, where its citizens have called for the ouster of Syrian troops and intelligence agents from the country.

There's also renewed momentum in efforts to make peace between Palestinians and Israelis, Abizaid noted, as well as an opportunity "to establish greater stability in Afghanistan and Iraq."

This year should also provide Iraqi and Afghan forces an opportunity "to take more and more of the responsibility of fighting the insurgencies" within their countries, he said.

And the Pakistani and Saudi governments, Abizaid observed, can benefit from more U.S. and coalition assis-

tance to help them confront extremists operating inside their borders.

However, the general cautioned committee members that extremist elements operating out of Iran and Syria could foment "more violence" across the Middle East.

"The extremist enemy that we face throughout the region will not surrender," Abizaid said, noting the extremists "won't move away, they'll continue their attacks."

By voting in nationwide elections held in their countries, the Afghan and Iraqi people have chosen to reject extremism and participate in a democratic process, Abizaid observed.

"This battle between moderation and extremism in the region is one that the people of the region have chosen to fight, and they can't win it without our help," he concluded.

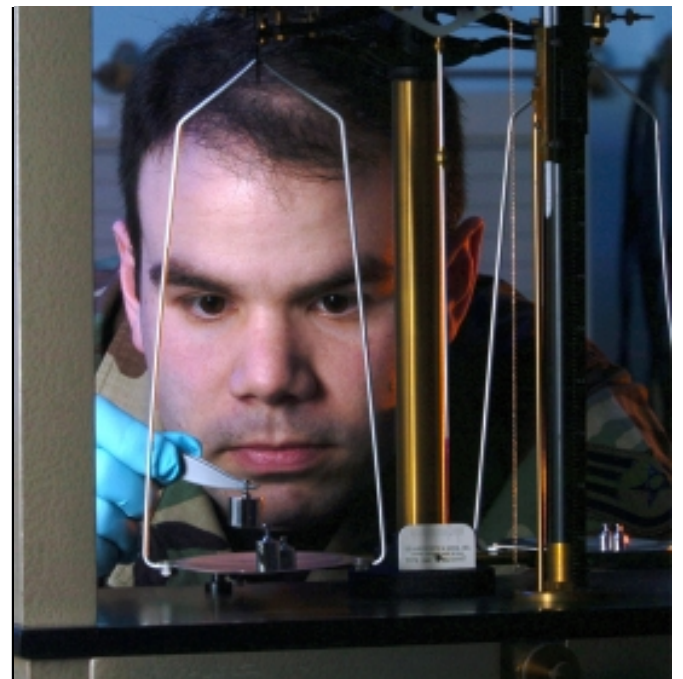


Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

Balanced business

Staff Sgt. Keith Malloy uses precision balance equipment to examine standard weights during a routine check Yokota Air Base, Japan. He is a precision measurement equipment laboratory technician assigned to the 374th Maintenance Squadron.

Tops in Blue entertains Del Rio audience

Compiled from staff reports

The Air Force's top entertainment group, Tops in Blue, performed here March 4 for a full crowd at the Paul Poag Theatre in Del Rio.

The 35-member group lit up the stage with its high-energy show entitled "Musicology," a mixture of the musical sounds of America.

From country and swing music to the sounds of "Madonna" and "Peaches and Herb," the show featured a variety of music, songs and fast-stepping dance moves that kept the audience tuned in.

Known as the Air Force's Expeditionary Entertainers, the team's main mission is to perform for military personnel and their families throughout the world.

The group will visit more than 120 locations and perform over 150 shows in the United States and 23 international countries while on its current tour.

For more information about Tops in Blue or to learn how to join the group, visit the team's Web site at https://www-r.afsv.af.mil/TIB_Ltd.



Photos by Capt. Paula Kurtz

Second Lieutenant Timothy Rawson, of the 47th Flying Training Wing protocol office, is treated with a song, specially dedicated to him as he joins Tops in Blue singers on stage.



(Left) Tops in Blue members Airman 1st Class David Weaver (left) and 1st Lt. Carlos Jayme perform a fiddling act while (above) Airman Weaver and 1st Lt. Laura Richmond do a rendition of "Sonny and Cher."

Caring enough to bring the very best

Laughlin's medical group secures special travel for special patient, mom

Story and photos by
2nd Lt. Sheila Johnston
Public Affairs

Summer is drawing near when permanent change of station orders begin circulating and new jobs and duty locations become all the talk around base. Families say "goodbye" to the friends they've made and collect phone numbers and e-mail addresses to keep in touch with one another; all the while, they are excited to experience new destinations and meet new friends.

For most, this is the case. However, for others, a PCS can prove to be more of a juggling act than expected if they have a family member with special medical needs. This was recently the case for a Laughlin family.

Benjamin Stuart, the 13 month old son of Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Stuart, 47th Maintenance Directorate, and his wife Nancy, has been in hospitals for about two and a half months of his life so far.

Despite being home for the last several weeks, Sergeant Stuart says Benjamin still requires around-the-clock care, and traveling for several days with limited access to medical

facilities and personnel could be dangerous for Benjamin. With a PCS to Little Rock, Ark. in the works, the Stuarts had to determine how best to care for Benjamin en route.

"We worked with Dr. Perez-Johnson to decide what would be the best way to get him there," said Sergeant Stuart.

Eventually the family, with the help of the 47th Medical Group staff and others, decided that sending Benjamin and Nancy on a direct flight from Laughlin to Little Rock was in the best interest of Benjamin's health.

Phoenix Air, a private company from Arizona, was contracted to pick Benjamin and Nancy up on Laughlin's flightline. Maj. Patricia Cifelli, 47th Medical Operations Squadron, said the crew members and aircraft had more than sufficient equipment to care for Benjamin during the estimated one-hour flight.

"It's a small jet similar to our T-1 aircraft," she said, "but inside, it's like a mini-ICU(intensive care unit)."

The team, consisting of a medic, a nurse, a pilot and co-pilot,



Phoenix Air nurse Mike Roberson finishes up a pre-flight health assessment of Benjamin Stuart, 13 months old, while talking with his parents Nancy and Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Stuart, 47th Maintenance Division, in Laughlin's base operations waiting area here Mar. 2. Benjamin and Nancy flew Phoenix Air from Laughlin's flightline to Little Rock, Ark. in preparation for the family's permanent change of station.

talked with Nancy and took a few minutes to get to know Benjamin before loading up the plane and heading for Little Rock March 2.

The medical group personnel on site to see Benjamin and Nancy off were sad to see them go, but glad they could make a difference and help the family find top-notch care for Benjamin at the fifth-ranked children's hospital in the nation.

Col. Laura Torres-Reyes, 47th MDG commander, said, "This is what we live for... when we can make a difference like this. It's also important for our Laughlin community to know that they will receive world class care from our truly dedicated staff and providers like Dr. Perez-Johnson."

Once arriving in Little Rock, Benjamin was scheduled to meet with emergency room personnel to ensure he and Nancy could go home with their family members who live in the area.

Sergeant Stuart said he's learned many things and met many special people over the past few months.

"It wasn't one of the best ways to meet them," he said, "but, while we were still in ICU, we met some really great people... especially those who deal with children (in ICU) day-in-and-day-out."

While deeply appreciating their help, he said the outpouring of generosity was almost overwhelming.

He said he is used to helping others, but it isn't easy for him to accept help from his comrades.

"Being an NCO, I'm always looking out for my people. I'm always looking for ways to help them or point them in the right direction," he said. "Being in this situation has really taught me that it truly is easier to give than to receive."



Nancy Stuart carries son Benjamin, 13 months old, to a chartered plane on Laughlin's flight line Mar. 2. The pair flew with a four-member intensive-care crew to Little Rock, Ark. for the family's permanent change of station.



Laughlin Salutes

February enlisted promotions

To Master Sergeant:

- Robert Bone, 47th Operations Support Squadron
- Jeffrey Brown, 47th Mission Support Group

To Staff Sergeant:

- Stephanie Britt, 47th OSS
- Melvin Isaia, 47th Communications Squadron
- Edward Merz, 47th Security Forces Squadron

To Senior Airman:

- Jesse Campbell, 47th CS
- Crystal Faircloth, 47th MSG
- John Goodwin, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron
- Michael McClain, 47th OSS

- Yanira Rodriguez-Crawford, 47th CS
- James Stell, 47th CS
- Matthew Teigen, 47th CS

To Airman 1st Class:

- Matthew Brouillette, 47th SFS
- Jerald David, 47th SFS
- Gregory Schisler, 47th CES

To Airman:

- John Dillard, 47th CES
- Mario Nozawa, 47th CES

February reenlistees

- Master Sgt. Jeffrey Cunningham, 47th Mission Support Squadron
- Tech. Sgt. Shane MacPhearson, 47th OSS
- Master Sgt. David Cole, 47th MSG

3X11RiCKS

2X5
Salon
& Day
Spa

The *XLer*



Photo by Airman 1st Class Olufemi Owolabi

Master Sgt. Isaac Miller
47th Medical Support Squadron

Arrived at Laughlin: January 2004
Hometown: Flushing-Queens, New York City, N.Y. but relocated to Columbia, Md.
Family: Son - Isaac, 15, daughters - Keisha, 13, Jasmine, 9, Parents – Isaac & Evelyn Miller, Brother - Tech. Sgt. Jessup Miller
Time in service: 19 years, 10 months
Education: Non-commissioned Officer Leadership, NCO Prep, NCO Academy, Senior NCO Academy Correspondence
Assignments: Andersen AFB, Guam, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Wash. D.C., Eglin AFB, Fla.
Greatest feat: Raising my son into a fine young man.
Greatest accomplishment: Being a positive influence on the people I have led. To this day, I hear from Airmen and junior NCOs I have led on how well they are doing with their lives, Air Force careers and promotions. That tells me I accomplish what I’ve set out to do.
Leadership quote: I work for the people I lead; I roll my sleeves up and get dirty if

need be and a to be good leader, you must be a good follower.
Personal heroes: Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Lou Gehrig, Walt “Clyde” Frazier, Reggie Jackson and Derek Jeter
Favorite movies: “Godfathers I & II”, “Scarface”, “Goodfellows”, “Malcolm X” and “King of New York”
Hobbies: Working out and listening to Music
Bad habits: Drinking coffee and staying up too late!
Greatest inspiration: My Parents and Grandmother. With their unconditional love and guidance, they made me the man I am today.

Editor’s note: Master Sgt. Isaac Miller will retire Tuesday and his retirement ceremony will be at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Park. After his retirement, he will be relocating to his hometown Columbia, Md.

5X5.5 AD

Harlem Ambassadors thrill Laughlin crowd

Compiled from staff reports

The Harlem Ambassadors brought their high-flying, comic-filled basketball show to Laughlin Wednesday and thrilled the crowd of all ages.

The Ambassadors, internationally known for fancy ball handling and comedy routines with opponents and audiences, played a friendly game against Laughlin's Team XL All-Stars and several base officer and enlisted leaders.

During breaks, the Ambassadors played games and provided prizes for children in attendance.

The Harlem Ambassadors travel throughout the world entertaining military troops and communities. This team is currently on its "Stars and Stripes" tour.

In addition, the team promotes the value of being good citizens, staying off drugs, and fostering racial harmony.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill

Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Prothro (left), 47th Communications Squadron, and Maj. Michael Greiner, 47th Comptroller Squadron commander, try to defend Harlem Ambassadors guard Krataura Buckner. Buckner is the Ambassadors' lead show player.



The Harlem Ambassadors play a game of musical chairs with some of the youth in attendance.



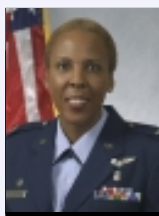
(Above) Lydell Hudson of the Team XL All-Stars looks to steal the ball from Harlem Ambassadors center/forward Jermaine Williams during Wednesday night's match up. (At right) The Ambassadors show one youth how to strut in style in order to pick up her prize after winning a half-time contest.



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What's up Doc?

By Col. Laura Torres-Reyes
47th Medical Group
commander

Question: My friend recently told me that I should eat more chocolate because it's good for my health. Is that true?

Answer: Yes, it is! But before you run out and buy a pound of Godiva, please consider the

facts.

Recent studies have suggested that eating a small amount of chocolate (1.6 ounce bar) every day may be good for you.

The key ingredient in dark chocolate is flavonoids, which may prevent stiffening of the blood vessels, increases blood flow in the arteries, and appear to be good for the heart.

It's important to know that not all chocolate contains flavonoids, and standard manufacturing processes can destroy up to half of a product's flavonoid content.

White chocolate, milk chocolate and instant cocoa mixes don't contain any flavonoids. The great news is that companies are start-

ing to change their process for dark chocolate that retain up to 95% of flavonoids.

Other foods that contain flavonoids to a lesser degree include green and black tea, red wine, and blueberries.

Of course, the down side of chocolate is that it is loaded with calories, so even the low-carbohydrate type of Belgian chocolate will add inches to your waistline if you're not careful.

For "chocoholics", the risk of obesity far outweighs any benefit from the chocolate. Also, all of the studies have only looked at short term benefits, and haven't evaluated the long-term effects.

Bottom line: a small amount of

chocolate a day may keep the doctor at bay, but nothing beats the proven old fashion way of a balanced diet and active lifestyle.

For more information on smart diet, exercise, and nutrition information, please contact the Health and Wellness Center at 298-6464.

Thanks for your question!

You can contact our Family Care provider on call for advice and authorization for emergency care from 4:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. Monday through Friday, weekends, and holidays at 703-6199.

You may contact Colonel Torres-Reyes at laura.torres-reyes@laughlin.af.mil if you have a What's Up Doc? question.

Governor urges Texans to live healthy lifestyle

Governor Rick Perry is getting personal. On Feb. 21 the Governor and First Lady made a formal appeal to each and every Texan: step up their level of daily activity, and pledge to make healthier lifestyle choices in order to reduce the number of serious diseases and deaths that occur each year from obesity in our state.

Challenging Texas mayors to engage their citizens, the Governor at a press conference encouraged all Texans to put on their rally caps, lace up their athletic shoes, and join him for the second annual Texas Round-Up six-week fitness program and the April 30 10K race around the State Capitol Grounds.

"Regular physical activity is essential to Texans living longer and healthier lives," said Governor Perry. "The Texas Round-up aims to turn the tide on obesity and preventable illnesses by making physical activity and proper nutrition a priority of every

Texan."

According to the Texas Department of Health, more than 61 percent of the adults and 35 percent of school-age children in Texas are overweight or obese. While this rate is staggering, the ultimate statistics are even graver: more than half of all deaths in Texas are related to unhealthy eating and lifestyle choices, and poor exercise habits.

Additionally, the department estimates that each year this sedentary lifestyle costs the State \$10.5 billion dollars in costs associated with health care and lost productivity due to illness, disability and premature death from diseases like diabetes, hypertension, breast cancer, sleep apnea and arteriosclerosis to name a few.

"My challenge to every Texan is to make a personal pledge — to themselves and the people they love — to be physically active for at least 150 minutes a week," Perry said. "Not everyone can be an Olympic athlete, but everyone

can realize the benefits of regular physical activity and a healthier lifestyle."

The Texas Round-Up is a program of the OneStar Foundation and is sponsored in part by corporations interested in increasing the healthy lifestyles of the people of Texas.

Second Annual Texas Round-Up activities will start on April 29 with a Health and Fitness Expo, including health screenings and education, and continue through April 30, events will include the Governor's Challenge 10K Race — a 10K Run/Walk, a 10K Relay, and a Kid's Mile — as well as an Interactive Village for Kids and a Post-10K Street Party.

For more information, or to register for the Activity Training Program and/or the 10K Race, please visit www.texasroundup.org.

(Courtesy Texas Department of State Health Services)



photo by 1st Lt. Benjamin Silva

Teamwork...

(From left) Maj. (Dr.) Steven Cyr and Michael Peck ensure the abdominal area is ready for disc replacement at Lackland Air Force Base. Dr. Cyr is the orthopedic spine surgery chief at Wilford Hall Medical Center, and Dr. Peck is a general vascular surgeon with the 859th Surgical Operations Squadron. They are among Wilford Hall Medical Center's orthopedic spine surgery team that performs the Air Force's first total-disc arthroplasty procedure at Lackland Air Force Base. During the five-hour procedure, surgeons removed and replaced a failed disc in the back of Tech. Sgt. Loren Dick with a new three-piece medical device consisting of two metal endplates of medical-grade cobalt chromium alloy and a sliding core made of medical-grade plastic.